



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS  
LANSING

ORLENE HAWKS  
DIRECTOR

**Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan, Commission Meeting**  
**Muskegon Community College, Sturges Technology Center**  
**388 W. Clay, Muskegon, MI 49440**  
**March 22, 2019-6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**  
**Meeting Minutes No. 321**

**Commissioners Present**

Sonya Hernandez, Chair  
Monica B. Reyes, Vice Chair  
Juanita Bocanegra, Secretary  
Esperanza Cantu, Trustee

Jesse M. Bernal  
Jessica Cruz  
Carlos E. Pava  
Anthony Rubio

**Staff Present:**

Felipe Lopez Sustaita, Executive Director; Daniel Carreon-Camberos, Coordinator; Ana Manzano, Program Assistant

**Guests:**

**Start Audio Recording:**(06:08:50 PM)

**1) Call to Order:** (06:08:53 PM)

Chair Sonya Hernandez calls the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

**Introduction:** Chair Hernandez calls the meeting to order. She states this is the Hispanic/ Latino Commission and would like to begin with role call.

**2) Roll Call:**

Commissioners Jesse M. Bernal, Anthony Rubio, Jessica Cruz, Juanita Bocanegra, Sonya Hernandez, Monica B. Reyes, Carlos Pava, and Esperanza Cantu were all present. (06:09:11 PM)

**3) Emergency Vote:** The commission has been approved to allow commissioners to participate in meetings through teleconferencing, while still being considered present. Commissioners who are unable to attend in person due to health, work, or travel complications will contact the executive committee for approval, at least two weeks in advance. (06:10:15 PM)

**MOTION: Commissioner Monica B. Reyes moves, and it is seconded by Commissioner Juanita Bocanegra. The motion was carried. (06:11:19 PM)**

**4) Approval of Commissioner Absences:**

Commissioners Jesse Venegas, Angela Baldwin, Juan Martinez, Ivonne M. Soler, Keysha Camps, and Jeremiah Hernandez had excused absences. (06:12:54 PM)

**5) Approval of Agenda:**

Reading of the agenda. (06:13:11 PM)

**MOTION: Commissioner Monica B. Reyes moves, and it is seconded by Commissioner Juanita Bocanegra.. The motion was carried. (06:13:16 PM)**

Sonya Hernandez, Chair  
Monica B. Reyes, Vice Chair  
Juanita Bocanegra, Secretary  
Esperanza Cantu, Trustee  
Angela L. Baldwin

Jesse M. Bernal  
Keysha Camps  
Jessica Cruz  
Jeremiah Hernandez

Juan Martinez  
Carlos E. Pava  
Anthony Rubio  
Ivonne M. Soler  
Jesse Venegas

**6) Approval of Minutes from November 2, 2018: (06:13:30 PM)**

**Minutes from the Friday, November 2 meeting at the San Juan Diego Academy in Wyoming, Michigan.**

**MOTION: Commissioner Juanita Bocanegra motioned, and Commissioner Anthony Rubio seconds the motion. The motion was carried to accept the minutes from the meeting at the San Juan Diego Academy in Wyoming, Michigan. (06:13:42 PM)**

**7) Public Comment: (06:14:17 PM)**

- a) **Rep. Terry Sabo-** Is happy to have the commission holding a meeting on the west side of Michigan, and is proud of the work Commissioner Sonya Hernandez is doing. (06:14:22 PM)
- b) **Sheriff Michael Poulin-** Echoes what Rep. Sabo mentioned; He is glad to see the commission present in Muskegon, and is proud of the work done by Commissioner Sonya Hernandez as well. (06:15:19 PM)
- c) **Poppy Sias Hernandez, Regional Director of Community Affairs for Gov. Office-** Really appreciates the commission's commitment to being in Muskegon, and the work done with our Hispanic/Latino community. (06:15:48 PM)
- d) **Elizabeth Briseno-** Announcing an upcoming community event, the Muskegon County Latino Festival, to be held right across the street. Love Your Community grant was also received to fund the festival. She is thankful for the work done by the commission, but encourages the local Muskegon county commissioner to make their presence known. (06:16:53 PM)
- e) **Mark A. Witte-** Exec. Director of Allegan County Community Mental Health. The agency has began to do more focused work with Hispanic/Latino community in Allegan county, hosting a "day of caring" in Pullman twice already. Mark also reports that the agency has received a state grant for providing multicultural services to Allegan county, and he hopes to normalize the planned community work past the end of the grant. (06:19:42 PM)
- f) **Angelita Valdez-** Community services provider in Muskegon. She spoke about the various counseling and other services for Hispanic/Latinos in and around Muskegon, and her concerns with a lack of communication with younger populations when it comes to promoting commission meetings. She also spoke of an upcoming event, "Red de la Salud", that has been ongoing in the community, and invited the commissioners to attend. (06:25:51 PM)
- g) **Dale Freeman-** Provided an update on the food assistance flyers that have now been translated by DHHS, to keep non-English speakers updated on the changes to the program. He appreciates the commission bringing that issue up. The IMSC has also recently finished a report for the MDCR regarding farmworker wages, and a wide variety of issues including zoning laws for migrant labor camps, and housing issues. There is also a recommendation attached for the State of Michigan to provide more flexible Medicaid eligibility for migrant farm workers, joining 33 other states already doing this. (06:27:54 PM)
- h) **Misty Gallegos-** Helping to run a suicide prevention program (Question, Persuade, Refer) in the area. She spoke of the serious suicide issues within our young Latino population, and hopes the commission will take interest in supporting initiatives like this one. (06:32:27 PM)
- i) **Richard Olivares-** Michigan agency for energy. Due to an executive order from Governor Withmer, MAE will be merged into a new department, and will not be providing translated information on energy-saving tips in Spanish. This will now be handled by the Michigan Public Service Commission. (06:33:48 PM)
- j) **Dale Nesbary-** Is happy to have the commission hosted at the community college, and to see their growth since the last time he had an interaction with the commission. (06:35:45 PM)

**8) Executive Reports: (06:37:54 PM)**

**a) Chair Hernandez (06:38:00 PM)**

- a. Executive committee met with new LARA Director, who oversees the work done by the HLCOM. Some topics discussed include: our budget, maintaining our own identity, reinterpretation of open meetings act for access to teleconferencing for commissioners unable to attend meetings, and clarity on the role of the Michigan Office for New Americans (MONA) in connection to our work. Overall, the meeting went very well. (06:38:16 PM)
- b. Statewide Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration will be taking place in Grand Rapids on October 10, 2019; first time in the west of Michigan. (06:39:57 PM)
- c. The HLCOM will not be contributing towards the MONA Gala, which will not be moving forward this year. (06:40:26 PM)
- d. Has been in communication with Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Superintendent John Severson, in regards to the Muskegon Promise (a program providing free college education). Chair Hernandez is concerned about the FAFSA application piece of the program, as undocumented students that would be eligible are deterred from applying to the program. After finding out only 4.1% of students receiving the Muskegon Promise are Latino, she is looking for more access for other Latino students. (06:40:59 PM)
- e. Has been in contact with Muskegon county Sheriff, for more clarity on why Hispanic/Latino inmates are not properly tracked. Amongst the various issues this causes, the lack of data is shared across the state counties. (06:42:51 PM)
- f. Kent County had wrongfully kept a U.S. citizen and veteran in their county jail, after he was detained by ICE. The county jail now requires a judicial warrant to hold any ICE detainees. (06:44:24 PM)
- g. The 20<sup>th</sup> Latino Youth Conference was hosted at Grand Rapids Community College, with Chair Hernandez as the MC for the event, and chair of the scholarship committee. Approximately 800 8<sup>th</sup> graders were in attendance, attending various workshops, learning about different careers, and how to prepare for college. (06:45:37 PM)
- h. Acknowledgement of the recent indictment of former HLCOM Executive Director. Chair Hernandez wants to make sure there is full transparency with our constituents on that issue, that the current commissioners had no involvement in the matter, and that the HLCOM will be moving forward by continuing to engage with the community. (06:46:37 PM)

**b) Executive Director Felipe Lopez Sustaita (06:47:48 PM):**

- a.) Felipe welcomes Jesse M. Bernal and Jessica Cruz, as this is their first commission meeting since they began their tenure. (06:50:47 PM)
- b.) HLCOM 2018 Accomplishments report is now available. The report has allowed us to work with the Michigan Hispanic Caucus, so that we can begin organizing a legislative breakfast day. (06:51:11 PM)
- c.) Staff has been sending out biweekly reports to the commission, detailing the work we do on a day-to-day basis. We are looking into ways for publishing these reports online. (06:52:52 PM)
- d.) Statewide Graduation is coming up soon. This is the third year the HLCOM has hosted it, and it is important to show our community and state officials that the Hispanic/Latino community is making efforts to move up academically. (06:53:34 PM)
- e.) Felipe speaks on the importance of hosting our Hispanic Heritage Month celebration around the state, to make the event more accessible to our community. (06:54:49 PM)
- f.) There is an opening for a commission seat. Felipe encourages community members to apply. (06:55:40 PM)

- g.) Felipe touches on the meeting with the new LARA Director, and the importance of developing a good working relationship between the LARA Executive office, and the commission. (06:56:59 PM)
- h.) Met with the director of Iowa's Latino Affairs Office. Spoke about her story, and of ways that both commissions can work together. (06:57:37 PM)
- i.) Staff traveled to Ohio for a 2020 Census meeting, to keep in touch with the issues around the census, and seeing what is being done to reach our Latino population. (06:58:08 PM)
- j.) Felipe is working with the advocacy committee to organize a legislative breakfast, to develop a better relationship with state legislators. (06:58:56 PM)

**9) Committee Reports (07:00:20 PM)**

- a) **Financial Planning:** (07:00:33 PM) Chair Esperanza Cantu shares that although we have a tight budget, we need to make sure that we develop strong relations with legislators and stakeholders that influence our budget. This is one of the main focus areas for the committee, moving forward.
- b) **Public Relations:** (07:01:25 PM) Chair Monica B. Reyes reports that they are working on the Hispanic Heritage Month event, and partnering with the advocacy committee to organize the legislative breakfast. The committee will also see into ways for sharing census information to our communities, and urges commissioners to contact local community foundations to participate in census talks around the state.
- c) **Advocacy:** (07:03:45 PM) Coordinator Daniel Carreon-Camberos reported on behalf of committee chair Juan Martinez. The committee has been focusing on developing a regular meeting schedule, to keep up with legislative issues in the state. There is also a focus on establishing goals that align with the HLCOM strategic plan, and how the committee can meet those goals with the limited budget available.

**10) Old Business: (07:09:12 PM)**

- a. Bylaws update: Trustee Cantu has provided changes to the bylaws, to be reviewed by the commission prior to the next meeting in Cadillac, so that changes can be made in time.

**11) New Business: (07:10:02 PM)**

- a. Commissioner Venegas wants the commission to draft two letters in support of initiatives within the Detroit latino community. As the letters need to be drafted by Monday, the Executive committee is asking for a motion that allows them to take action on this over the weekend.

**MOTION: Commissioner Jesse M. Bernal moves, and it is seconded by Commissioner Rubio Bocanegra. The motion was carried. (07:11:11 PM)**

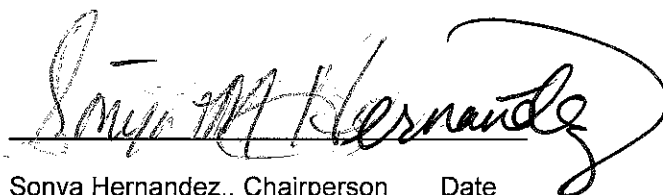
**12) Announcements: (07:11:41 PM)**

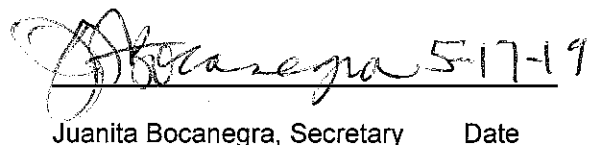
- a.) Next meeting: May 17, 2019 in Cadillac. Location TBD.

**13) Adjournment (07:12:00 PM)**

**MOTION: Chair Hernandez adjourned the meeting at 6:12 PM. Commissioner Reyes moves. Commissioner Rubio seconds it. They vote to adjourn meeting. Motion was carried. (07:12:00 PM)**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Sonya Hernandez., Chairperson      Date

 5-17-19  
Juanita Bocanegra, Secretary      Date